

ST. PETER AND APOSTOLIC JURISDICTION

The Holy Father's action in teaching that the bishops of the Catholic Church receive their power of jurisdiction from Our Lord through the Roman Pontiff rather than immediately from the Saviour Himself must inevitably focus the attention of theologians upon a question intimately related to that of the immediate source of episcopal jurisdiction. Theologians must look with renewed interest upon that section of their science which deals with the immediate source of that power of jurisdiction within the kingdom of God on earth enjoyed by the apostles themselves. Did the original members of the apostolic *collegium* receive their power of jurisdiction over the faithful immediately from Our Lord or did they possess it as something coming to them from Christ through Peter?

This question has had a long and highly interesting history in the literature of scholastic theology. The Dominican Cardinal John de Turrecremata, writing in the fifteenth century, and the Jesuit theologian James Laynez, writing in the sixteenth, both taught that the other members of the apostolic *collegium* received their episcopal "ordination" from St. Peter rather than directly from Our Lord Himself. They held that St. Peter alone had been raised to episcopal or pontifical dignity directly by Christ. Neither claimed the status of a complete and perfect theological conclusion for his thesis. Both, however, obviously considered their teaching on this point much more probable than its opposite.

John de Turrecremata devoted three chapters of the second book of his *Summa de ecclesia* to a consideration of this question.¹ The thirty-second chapter is given over to an enumeration and explanation of the various reasons brought forward in support of his thesis. The next chapter lists the various objections presented by the *adversarii*. Turrecremata, incidentally, takes cognizance of twelve of these objections. The thirty-fourth chapter answers each one of these objections in detail. In line with his usual procedure, Turrecremata employs the chapter which is primarily intended to answer objections in such a way as to bring out the full meaning of his own teaching. The procedure by which he attempts to

¹ Cf. *Summa de ecclesia* (Venice, 1561), pp. 144r ff.

establish his thesis is an interesting example of fifteenth-century theological method. It brings out both the deficiencies and the strong points characteristic of activity within the sacred sciences during that period.

Turrecremata brings forward nine distinct reasons in direct support of his contention. Curiously enough, however, he makes no effort to introduce any very strict kind of order in the arrangement of these *auctoritates* and *rationes*. His first two *auctoritates* turn out to be statements contained in the Pseudo-Isidorean decretals, statements attributed to Pope St. Anacletus. In one of these proofs he mentions the teaching of Remigius of Auxerre as confirming the doctrine attributed to Anacletus.

His third *auctoritas* is the famous Petrine text in the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel according to St. John.² He cites a passage from the last of St. John Chrysostom's homilies on this Gospel to show that Our Lord passed over the other apostles in order to confide this task to St. Peter alone. Turrecremata, incidentally, deals very briefly with this third argument, the only one of his proofs *ex auctoritate* which has any objective theological value. The fourth and fifth arguments are, like the first two, appeals to pseudographic sources, the one ascribed to Pope St. Clement I and the other to Pope St. Marcellus I.

We must not forget that Turrecremata was trying to prove more than merely the derivation of the other apostles' jurisdiction from that of St. Peter. It was his contention that St. Peter, alone among the apostles, had been consecrated and given episcopal orders as well as jurisdiction by Our Lord Himself. He was convinced that St. Peter had not only granted their episcopal jurisdiction to the other members of the apostolic *collegium*, but that he had also consecrated them as bishops. This view comes to the fore in his sixth argument, in which he draws a comparison between the case of Paul and Barnabas and that of St. Peter's original associates in the apostolate.

The Dominican Cardinal regarded it as perfectly evident that St. Peter had given episcopal consecration to both Paul and Barnabas. He was convinced that the prince of the apostles was one of those who imposed hands upon the two great missionaries to the Gentiles after the local Church at Antioch had received the

² John 21:15-17.

divine revelation that they had been set apart for special work for God's kingdom. Turrecremata reasoned that if St. Paul, whose apostolic vocation and mission came immediately from Our Lord stood in need of episcopal consecration at the hands of St. Peter, then surely all the other members of the apostolic company required the same ordination.

In the seventh of his arguments, Cardinal John de Turrecremata appeals, surprisingly enough, to the venerable theological principle, which he ascribes to both St. Jerome and St. Augustine, according to which it is wrong to enunciate about God any statement which cannot be demonstrated from the testimony of the divine Scriptures or from reason. He then asserts that there is neither authority nor reason for stating that any of the apostles other than St. Peter had been made a bishop immediately and directly by Our Lord Himself. He gives a detailed and astonishing powerful account of this *ratio*.

He takes cognizance first of the divine promise made to the apostolic group as a whole, the promise described in the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.³ These words, he contends correctly, certainly did not give the members of the apostolic collegium either episcopal orders or episcopal jurisdiction at the very moment they were uttered. St. Peter, he tells us, was definitely not constituted a bishop by a similar and even a greater promise previously made to him alone. Moreover, he insists, the apostles had not as yet received the basic priestly dignity and thus they could not have possessed the episcopal character. He appeals, furthermore, to the basic fact that the words in question are those of promise rather than of actual collation.

Turrecremata is likewise firm in his insistence that the power granted to the apostles at the Last Supper was not of an episcopal nature. He claims that the words "Do this in commemoration of me" gave the assembled apostles merely presbyteral rather than episcopal power. They made the Twelve capable of performing the act which Our Lord had just performed, the act of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The Dominican ecclesiologist is convinced that it would be absolutely incorrect to assume that by His words at the Last Supper Our Lord gave the apostles any power other than what was either directly or by way of concomitance signified in the formula itself. He likewise refuses to believe that Our Lord's

³ Matt. 18:18.

words to the apostles, empowering them to forgive sins, can be interpreted as a grant of episcopal power. He adverts to the fact that this phrase is employed in the ordination of a priest rather than in the consecration of a bishop in the Catholic Church.

The eighth argument for this thesis brought forward in the *Summa de ecclesia* is a kind of *ratio convenientiae*. The author draws a parallel between the unity of the human race and that of the true Church of Jesus Christ. Turrecremata reasons that it is fitting to believe that God would not have given the Church a type of unity less effective than that which He placed in the human family as such. Since the unity of the human family depends upon its descent from one common father, he believes that the unity of the Church must derive ultimately from one bishop, who conferred episcopal power upon all the others, rather than from many original possessors of the episcopal dignity. The ninth and final argument is based upon a comparison between the unity of the Church in the New Testament with that of the synagogue in the old dispensation. Since Moses gave pontifical power immediately and directly only to one man, it follows, according to Turrecremata, that it is more probable that Our Lord gave this dignity immediately and directly only to one of the apostles.

In his answers to the twelve distinct objections cited against his thesis Turrecremata gives ample evidence of his stature as a theologian. He is aware of the difficulty for his own contention latent in the characteristically Cyprianic statement that Our Lord had given "like power to all the apostles after the resurrection." He did not draw his objection from St. Cyprian's *De unitate*, however, but from a passage in Gratian's *Decretum* embodying much the same meaning. Gratian's canon is taken from the Pseudo-Isidorean collection. It is attributed to Pope St. Anacletus.

Turrecremata remarks that the objection drawn from a passage of this sort loses its effectiveness in the light of its own context. Obviously, according to the canon with which he is concerned (and according to the manifest teaching of the Catholic Church), the other apostles were not fully equal to St. Peter in all of his prerogatives. Furthermore, Turrecremata insists that, although this teaching means all of the other apostles had episcopal powers, as Peter himself had, it says nothing whatsoever about the question under consideration. The thesis defended by Turrecremata in-

sisted as forcefully as any other that all of the apostles' powers came from Our Lord. The question remained. Did the other apostles receive their episcopal character from Christ through Peter or directly from Our Lord Himself?

Turrecremata's *Summa de ecclesia* is chronologically the first relatively complete theological manual on the true Church of Jesus Christ. Before his time most of the material now dealt with in scholastic ecclesiology had been set forth only in the science of canon law. Hence by far the most important immediate source employed in the *Summa de ecclesia* is the *Corpus juris canonici*. Another text very frequently used by Turrecremata is the scholastic commentary on the scripture, the *Glossa ordinaria*. These sources provided him with material which was very often pseudonymous.

The net effect of these pseudonymous writings, as they were employed by Turrecremata, was merely to attribute genuine teachings of Catholic tradition to the wrong literary sources. The doctrines which the Dominican Cardinal believed to have been set down in writing by some great figures in the early Church were actually taught and written by others. Ultimately Turrecremata's thesis is merely his way of explaining the truth actually propounded by St. Leo the Great, the truth that "whatever He [Our Lord] did not withhold from others, He only gave through him [St. Peter]." ⁴ Here as elsewhere, the False Decretals contributed no decisive element for the elaboration of Catholic theology.

A century after Turrecremata had written his *Summa de ecclesia* his thesis was presented to the Tridentine Fathers by the eminent Jesuit theologian, James Laynez.⁵ His treatment of the subject, however, differed somewhat from that of his predecessor. Turrecremata was primarily interested in bringing out all the theological teachings about the true Church of Jesus Christ. Hence he was able to allocate this thesis as one portion of his material on the primacy of St. Peter. Laynez, on the other hand, was pre-eminently concerned with the thesis that the jurisdiction of bishops in the Catholic Church comes to them from Our Lord through the Holy Father. His teaching on the immediate origin of the apostles'

⁴ From the sermon on the second anniversary of his elevation to the pontificate. *MPL*, 54, 149.

⁵ Cf. Grisar's edition of the *Disputationes Tridentinae* (Innsbruck, 1886), I, 77 ff.

jurisdiction serves primarily as a kind of introduction to the other question. Indeed, Laynez was not directly interested at all in deciding whether or not the other apostles had actually received episcopal consecration at the hands of St. Peter. He set out to defend merely as more probable the opinion that the jurisdiction of the other members of the apostolic *collegium* was derived immediately from St. Peter. The question of episcopal orders, on which he was in agreement with Turrecremata, enters his work only incidentally.

The thesis is immeasurably better presented in the *Disputationes Tridentinae* than it is in the older work. Laynez arranged the elements of his demonstration much more effectively. He brings out a much more complete and pertinent set of *auctoritates*, thus giving tangible evidence of the enormous advances in patristic studies made during the time which had elapsed since the writing of the *Summa de ecclesia*. He was unaware, however, of the falsity of what is now known as the Pseudo-Isidorean collection, and so texts from this source appear in his proof side by side with authentic pronouncements of the Fathers. Laynez appeals to the writings of previous theologians, citing brief passages from St. Thomas, from Richard of Middleton, and from Durandus. Strangely enough, in this thesis he makes no mention of Turrecremata, although his "proof from reason" is much the same as that previously elaborated by the Dominican Cardinal.

The thesis defended by Turrecremata and by Laynez met very serious opposition at the hands of two outstanding Dominican theologians, Thomas de Vio Cardinal Cajetan and Francis de Victoria. Cajetan was quite moderate in his teaching. He is of the opinion that Our Lord gave immediately both episcopal orders and episcopal jurisdiction to the other apostles as well as to St. Peter but in such a way that these other apostles received as a favor what they were going to receive in the ordinary way from St. Peter. He is perfectly firm in his contention that "the power of *ordinarie*" from St. Peter himself.⁶ He by no means rules out the possibility that the other apostles actually received their episcopal consecration at the hands of St. Peter. His main concern

⁶ Cf. Cajetan's *De comparatione auctoritatis Papae et Concilii*, c. 3, in the *Scripta theologica*, edited by Pollet (Rome: The Angelicum, 1936), I, 27.

was obviously to show that the thesis of Turrecremata with reference to the immediate source of jurisdiction in the rest of the apostolic *collegium* was in no way necessary as a part of a demonstration that the Roman Pontiff exercised a genuine primacy of jurisdiction over the entire Church of God on earth.

Victoria, on the other hand, was primarily interested in a thesis which he admitted "was not going to please all the doctors, in law or in theology, and which certainly would not please the Cardinals Turrecremata and Cajetan."⁷ He was trying to prove that any of the apostles, and, for that matter, any bishop of the Church, could validly choose a successor, and that this successor would be validly a ruler in the Church apart from any consultation of St. Peter.

The fact that Cajetan had refused to support the basic teaching of Turrecremata in this respect, however, had important repercussions in the field of theology. Dominic Soto asserted that Turrecremata's doctrine that the other apostles had received their power of jurisdiction from St. Peter was unacceptable. "*Veritati non consonat*," was Soto's laconic qualification of this thesis.⁸ The brilliant Spanish Dominican was convinced that all the other apostles were Peter's equals with reference to the apostolic function, except for the fact that Peter was their leader, empowered to convoke a council and to perform the other acts a leader must perform. Soto held that St. Peter possessed a plenitude of jurisdiction within the Church, not only as an apostle, but also as Our Lord's vicar. Those who succeeded St. Peter in the government of the local Church in Rome took his place as vicars of Christ rather than as apostles. The other bishops in the Catholic Church (Soto is manifestly speaking of residential bishops exclusively), receive their apostolic authority only through the Roman Pontiff.

Like Dominic Soto, St. Robert Bellarmine tried to prove that it was not necessary to suppose that the other apostles had received their jurisdiction immediately from St. Peter in order to hold that all the other residential bishops of the Catholic Church derived their power of jurisdiction immediately from the Roman Pontiff. St. Robert appealed to four *rationes* in his attempt to show that the other apostles had received their power of jurisdiction immediately

⁷ Cf. Victoria's *Relectiones undecim* (Salamanca, 1565), p. 73r.

⁸ Cf. Soto's *Commentaria in quartam sententiarum*, (Venice, 1569), d. 20, q. 1, a. 2, conclusio 4, p. 991.

from Our Lord.⁹ First, he cited the words in St. John's Gospel, "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you,"¹⁰ and pointed to commentaries on this text by St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and Theophylactus. St. Robert's second argument is an appeal to the case of St. Matthias: his third, a mention of that of St. Paul. The fourth element in this proof consists of two propositions, that Our Lord chose the apostles and that these men possessed jurisdiction.

Francis Suarez followed St. Robert on this question, teaching that the power of jurisdiction had been given by Our Lord to the other apostles "immediately, although in a different and less perfect way" than to St. Peter.¹¹ Francis Sylvius arrived at the same conclusion. Sylvius, incidentally, interpreted the text from St. Leo the Great to have reference merely to the bishops who are successors of the apostles, and not to the apostles themselves.¹² He seems, however, to have seen more clearly than many of his fellow theologians the inherent strength of Turrecremata's thesis.

The late Cardinal Louis Billot made a definite and noteworthy contribution to this particular section of sacred theology.¹³ He taught that all of the apostles were equal in their power of orders and in their special apostolic charism of founding the Church militant of the New Testament. He also held that the other apostles' power of jurisdiction was exercised in two different ways. The apostles other than St. Peter had ordinary jurisdiction over individual local Churches. At the same time they all were competent to issue commands to other Churches, and even to the universal kingdom of God on earth.

Billot held that their ordinary jurisdiction, their power to rule over the individual local Churches founded by them or otherwise submitted to their direct control as individuals, was in a sense derived from the plenitude of Peter's universal pastoral power. Their power to command other Churches, and even the universal Church of Christ, on the other hand, must be considered, according

⁹ Cf. *De Romano Pontifice*, 1. 4, c. 23.

¹⁰ *John*, 20:21.

¹¹ In his *De legibus*, 1. 4, c. 3.

¹² In his *Controversiae*, 1. 4, q. 2, a. 5.

¹³ Cf. Billot's *De ecclesia*, 5th edition (Rome: The Gregorian, 1927), I, 563 ff.

to Billot, as purely vicarial in nature. They possessed this power only as the delegates of St. Peter.

Cardinal Billot's thesis does away with the difficulties inherent in the earlier hypotheses. Turrecremata had tried to bring out the essential unity of apostolic jurisdiction, but his explanation involved a series of claims to which the sources of divine revelation gave no backing. Cajetan and his followers, on the other hand, in their anxiety to bring out the immediacy of the apostolic mission in each one of the apostles failed to stress the essential oneness of the visible authority Our Lord had placed over His faithful. Future progress in this thesis will depend in large measure upon the advance already made by Louis Billot.

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LOVE FOR THE CHURCH

Now, if the natural law enjoins us to love devotedly and to defend the country in which we were born and raised, so that a good citizen will not hesitate to face death for his native land, it is very much more the duty of Christians to be always inspired by similar affections towards the Church. For the Church is the Holy City of the living God, born of God Himself, and built up and established by Him. Upon this earth, it is true, it is now in pilgrimage. But, by instructing and guiding men, it summons them to eternal happiness.

We are bound, then, to love dearly the country from which we have received the means of enjoyment this mortal life affords, but we have a much more urgent obligation to love with an ardent affection the Church, to which we owe the life of the soul, a life that will endure forever. For it is fitting to prefer the well-being of the soul to the good of the body, since duties towards God are of a far more hallowed character than those towards men. Moreover, in point of fact, the supernatural love for the Church and the natural love of our own country proceed from the same eternal principle, since God Himself is the Author of both.

—Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Exeunte iam anno*, issued on Christmas Day, 1888.

Answers to Questions

THE REPOSITORY ON HOLY THURSDAY

Question: (1) Is there any regulation as to how the repository is to be set up for Holy Thursday? (2) What should be the shape of the repository? (3) What material or materials should be used in the construction of it? (4) What are the correct symbols to be used in its ornamentation?

Answer: To reply, *per modum unius*, to the four questions above, we should suggest the following:

The liturgical regulations governing the repository of Holy Thursday are contained in the Missal and the *Memoriale rituum*. The former says simply that a suitable place be prepared in some chapel or altar in the church, adorned with hangings and lights, where the chalice with the consecrated Host can be reserved until the Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday. The *Memoriale rituum* adds that this place of reservation is to be apart from the high altar, that it be hung with veils of precious material, not black in color, that flowers as well as lights be used in its adornment but no relics or images of saints. It makes mention also of a coffer or chest (*capsula*) of elegant design and capable of being locked with a key as the resting place of the chalice with the Host. The Missal casually names this *capsula* without giving any details about its construction. The rubrics, both of the Missal and the *Memoriale rituum*, say nothing of the opening in the coffer being a door. According to the latter authority, it might well be covered with a lid, provided this can be securely locked.

Decrees of the Congregation of Sacred Rites (2873, *ad 2*; 3939, *ad 1*) make it clear that the repository on Holy Thursday may be properly called a sepulchre, as it is frequently denominated in Europe, since the burial of Our Lord is commemorated in it along with the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. The same Sacred Congregation, however, (3939, *ad 2*) has legislated that mortuary symbols or statues of the soldiers on guard or of the holy women coming to anoint the body of our Lord, or of St. John, or the Blessed Virgin are not to be used in the setting of the Holy Thursday Sepulchre. Where the bishop, however, judges that this custom